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## President, First Lady host reception and dinner in commemoration of 72<sup>nd</sup> Union Day



President U Win Myint, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and first lady Daw Cho Cho greet attendees who attend the dinner in commemoration of 72<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary Union Day in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

**P**RESIDENT U Win Myint and First Lady Daw Cho Cho hosted a reception and dinner to commemorate the 72<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary Union Day in the square in front of Nay Pyi

Taw City Hall yesterday evening. President U Win Myint, First Lady Daw Cho Cho and State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi arrived at the dinner venue at 6 p.m. and were wel-

comed by Vice President U Myint Swe and wife Daw Khin Thet Htay, Vice President U Henry Van Thio and wife Dr. Shwe Hlwan, Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat and wife Daw Yin

May, Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than and wife Daw Nant Kyin Kyi, Union Ministers and Nay Pyi Taw Council chairman and their wives. Next, President U Win Myint, First

Lady Daw Cho Cho and State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi cordially greeted the Union level officials, Union Ministers, high ranking Tatmadaw officers,

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## 72<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary Union Day State Flag raising ceremony held in Yangon

THE 72<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary Union Day State flag raising ceremony was held at the Independence Monument in Yangon, Kyauktada Township, Maha Bandoola Park yesterday morning at 7 a.m.

First, the military parade column representing Yangon Command and Myanmar Police Force band took their respective positions in front of the Independence Monument and saluted the Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein. Next, the Yangon Region Chief Minister along with the military parade column and attend-

ees saluted the stage flag as the Myanmar Police Force band played the national anthem.

Thereafter, the Yangon Region Chief Minister read the Union Day message sent by President U Win Myint, after which the ceremony came to a close. Present at the ceremony were Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein, Yangon Region Hluttaw Speaker U Tin Maung Tun, Yangon Command Commander Maj-Gen Thet Pone, Yangon Region High Court Chief Judge U Hla Aye, Yangon Region Hluttaw Deputy Speaker,



People gather in Maha Bandoola Park on 72<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary Union Day in Yangon yesterday. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

Yangon Region government ministers, Yangon Region Advocate, Yangon Region Auditor, high rank-

ing Tatmadaw officers, Yangon Region Hluttaw representatives, political parties, departmental per-

sonnel, members of civil society organisations, ethnic nationals, students and members of the public from

districts and townships.—  
Thant Sin Win ■

(Translated by  
Zaw Min)

## NLD HQ commemorates 72<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary Union Day



National League for Democracy commemorates 72<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary Union Day at National League for Democracy headquarters in Bahan Township, Yangon. PHOTO: ZAW GYI

THE 72<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary of Union Day ceremony was held at the National League for Democracy (NLD) headquarters yesterday morning.

At the ceremony, Republic of Union of Myanmar independence architect Bogyoke Aung San and the martyrs were saluted, followed by observing an 8 seconds of silence for those who lost their lives through a range of the movement toward democracy.

Next, chairperson of the ceremony NLD central executive committee secretary member U Nyan Win delivered an opening speech saying that Bogyoke Aung San and ethnic nationals gave birth to the Union and Panglong spirit that were in harmony with

national policy and in the same way we are to establish a union that take into consideration the historical situation of the ethnic nationals without any deviation from our wishes and our races. The policy of a supreme national and a narrow minded nationalist policy are to be rejected and opposed.

He continued and said the political policy and view of NLD is achieving unity, peace and democracy based on national reconciliation. That is why starting from Pyithu Hluttaw, Amyotha Hluttaw and state/region Hluttaws in forming of a government policy set to include ethnic nationals, competing entities, Tatmadaw personnel, qualified and in intellectuals.

Afterwards, a 72<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary Union Day NLD declaration was read by central executive committee member U Thein Oo and congratulatory messages sent by political parties and organisations were put on record.

The ceremony was attended by members of NLD chair, central executive committee members, Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein, Yangon Region Hluttaw Speaker U Tin Maung Tun and Deputy Speaker U Lin Naing Myint, Hluttaw representatives, diplomats from embassies in Yangon, NLD members, representatives of political parties and civil society organisations and invited guests.—Zaw Gyi  
(Translated by Zaw Min)

## Ministries' sports meet commemorating Union Day held

IN commemoration of 72<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary of Union Day, ministries' sports meet was held at training fields in Wunna Theikdi Sports Stadium yesterday morning.

Games like man/woman pillow fights, running with legs put together in a gunny sack, tug-of-war, toke-see-toe (a traditional team game) and 100, 200 and 400 meter races were held as Union Minister Dr. Myint Htwe and officials cheered the competitors.

After the competi-

tions Union Minister Dr. Myint Htwe, Deputy Minister Dr. Mya Lay Sein, Union Civil Service Board member Dr. U Pwa and officials presented prizes to the winning teams of the competitions and games.

Ministry of Health and Sports had been permitting people to freely conduct sports activities in sports ground to develop the health and strength of people in the country. In addition to this arrangements had been made for public servants

from ministries and departments in Nay Pyi Taw to practice sports and conduct exercises in sports grounds and stadiums in Wunna Theikdi Sports Ground for free individually or in group by simply showing their departmental ID cards.

Furthermore, more sports and games competitions with higher and better prizes will be held increasingly according to Ministry of Health and Sports. — MNA

(Translated by Zaw Min)



Union Minister Dr. Myint Htwe presents cash prize to winners at Wunna Theikdi Stadium, Nay Pyi Taw, yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

## President, First Lady host reception, dinner in commemoration ...



President U Win Myint, first lady and attendees enjoy the traditional dance performance at the dinner in commemoration of 72<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary Union Day in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

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states/regions ethnic national ministers, leading members of the peace process, chairmen and representatives of political parties, Hluttaw representatives and states/regions ethnic national culture troupes who attended the dinner.

Afterwards the President, First Lady and State Counsellor had dinner together with attendees while Myanmar Radio's

modern music troupe together with ethnic nationals provided entertainment with songs.

The dinner was attended by Chief Justice of the Union U Htun Htun Oo, Tatmadaw Commander-in-Chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Chairman of the Constitutional Tribunal of the Union U Myo Nyunt and wife Daw Htay Yi, Chairman of the Union Election Commission U Hla Thein and his wife Daw Aye Thidar, Tatmadaw Deputy

Commander-in-Chief and Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice Senior General Soe Win and wife Daw Than Than Nwe, Amyotha Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Aye Tha Aung and wife Daw Thein Yin Chay, Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission Chairman Thura U Shwe Mann and wife Daw Khin Lay Thet. Also in attendance were Union Ministers, Union Attorney General, Union Auditor-General, Union

Civil Service Board Chairman, Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman, Central Bank of Myanmar Governor, Anti-Corruption Commission Chairman, Myanmar National Human Rights Commission Chairman and their wives, Chief of Staff (Army, Navy, Air), high-ranking Tatmadaw officers and their wives, Hluttaw Affairs committees chairmen, Deputy Ministers, states/regions ethnic affairs ministers, Hluttaw representatives, leading members

of the peace process, chairmen and representatives of political parties, heads of departments, states/regions cultural dance troupes and invited guests.

After the dinner, the President, First Lady, State Counsellor and the guests were entertained by artists from the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture, Department of Fine Arts and states/regions cultural dance troupes in the City Hall open-air stadium. — MNA



Union Minister Nai Thet Lwin meets with states/regions ethnic affairs ministers who attend the 72<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary Union Day ceremony. **PHOTO: MNA**

## Union Minister for Ethnic Affairs receives states/regions ethnic affairs ministers

Union Minister for Ethnic Affairs Nai Thet Lwin received states/regions ethnic affairs ministers at the Union Minister's residence in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon. The states/regions ethnic affairs ministers were in Nay Pyi Taw to attend the 72<sup>nd</sup> Union Day ceremony.

At the meeting enactment

of Ethnic Rights Protection Rule; easing and smoothening the acquisition of loans for ethnic national SMEs to raise the socio-economic situation of ethnic nationals; developing, maintaining and protecting of ethnic traditional cultures; supporting and assisting to hold yearly the Ethnic Culture Fest held recently

in Yangon; and more cooperation on ethnic affairs in states and regions were discussed. Later the Union Minister and wife offered coffee, tea, soft drinks and snacks to the states/regions ethnic affairs ministers and continued the cordial and open discussion on ethnic affairs. — MNA (Translated by Zaw Min)

## Kayah State Govt, protesters reach consensus in negotiations

THE Kayah State Government held negotiations yesterday with some leaders of the protesters who had staged a sit-in at Loikaw, after they were dispersed by the police. Yesterday morning, protesters had marched in four groups to the Kandarhaywun Park, where a statue of Bogyoke Aung San has been erected.

Before dispersing the crowd, the authorities, led by the Head of the Loikaw District Administration Department, negotiated with the protesters, asking them not to assemble at the park as the Union Day celebrations was being held and they had not sought prior permission from the authorities, in accordance with the Peaceful Assembly Law.

When the protesters refused the authorities and removed the barricades and continued to march, the police fired rubber bullets and water cannons to disperse the crowd. Afterwards, the protesters staged a sit-in outside the Kandarhaywun Park.

They held negotiations with representatives from the Kayah State Government after the offi-

cialists asked them.

In the evening, the two sides reached an agreement. The authorities agreed to revoke charges filed against the protesters, who, in turn, agreed to suspend further protests. A separate meeting will be held within a month between the committee that supports erecting the Bogyoke Aung San statue, and the committee against it. The consensus reached at the meeting will be implemented by the government. If there is consensus on the speech and pledge by Bogyoke Aung San and the Panglong Agreement, with full evidence from both sides involved in the negotiation, the government will inscribe them on the stone plaque. The protesters agreed to suspend protests, for or against the statue, while negotiations are on, beginning Tuesday night. The consensus will be implemented by the government within a month. If the government fails to implement the consensus, the Bogyoke statue will be moved to a concerned office. —Loikaw District IPRD (Translated by Zaw Min)

# 72<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary Union Day State Flag raising, saluting ceremony held in Nay Pyi Taw



Vice President U Myint Swe attends the ceremony to celebrate the 72<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary Union Day in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

**T**HE 2019 72<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary of Union Day State flag hoisting and saluting ceremony was held in front of the Nay Pyi Taw City Hall yesterday morning, where 72<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary Union Day Convening Central Committee chairman Vice-President U Myint Swe read a Union Day message sent by the President.

The 72<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary of Union Day was held with the five objectives : —

1. All ethnic nationals to work with collective strength for non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national unity, perpetuation of national sovereignty; and to work for preservation and

protection of the above.

2. To strive for the emergence of a Constitution that is in alignment and harmony with the Democratic Federal Union.

3. To strive for the success of the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panlong and thence till the success of the internal peace process.

4. All union nationals to cooperate and work in “Unity and Harmony” for rule of law and for the people to be secure and free from danger.

5. All union citizens to be able to enjoy good education and adequate health care protection.

First, the flag raising ceremony was held at 5:30 am

when the state flag hoisting team, along with members of national races, raised the flag of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Departmental personnel, members from civil society and community-based organizations, ethnic nationals and invited guest took in their respective places at 5 am.

The State flag saluting ceremony was held at 7 am, when the Tatmadaw (Army, Navy, Air) Guard of Honor marched into the square in front of Nay Pyi Taw City Hall to take up their places.

Next, the 72<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary Union Day Convening committee chairman Vice-President

took the salute of the Guard of Honour.

Afterwards, the Vice-President and those in attendance saluted the state flag, while the national anthem was played by the Guard of Honour.

Vice-President U Myint Swe then read the Union Day message sent by President U Win Myint, after which the ceremony came to a close.

The ceremony was attended by Amyotha Hluttaw Deputy Speaker, Union Ministers, Union Attorney-General, Union Auditor General, Union Civil Service Board Chairman, Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman, Central Bank of Myanmar Governor, Anti-Corruption

Commission Chairman, Myanmar National Human Rights Commission Chairman, high ranking Tatmadaw officers, Union Supreme Court judges, Nay Pyi Taw Command commander, deputy ministers, Deputy Attorney-General, states/ regions ethnic affairs ministers, Hluttaw representatives, heads of departments, departmental personnel, ethnic national cultural troupes, family members of Tatmadaw regiments based in the Nay Pyi Taw council area, members of social service organisations, representatives of ethnic nationals and invited guests. — MNA ■

(Translated by Zaw Min)

## Rakhine State Government celebrates 72<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary Union Day

RAKHINE STATE Government celebrated the 72<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary Union Day at the Danyawady Sports Grounds in Sittway yesterday, with the honouring of the sports athletes who won in the Union Day commemorative contests.

The ceremony began with saluting the State Flag by the Myanmar Police Force and Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu. Afterwards, Chief Minister U Nyi Pu read out the message from President U Win Myint to the 72<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary Union Day.

The Chief Minister also presented prizes to sports athletes

who stood first, second and third in the Union Day Peace Run.

Rakhine State Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Mya Than, Rakhine State Security and Border Affairs Minister Col Phone Tint, wife of the Chief Minister, and officials also presented prizes to the winners of the contests.

In the evening, local people were entertained with traditional dances of ethnic peoples at the same grounds.

The ceremony ended at night with the Chief Minister and ministers presenting cash awards to ethnic performing troupes.—Tin Tun (IPRD)



Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu reads the message sent by President U Win Myint to the 72<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary of Union Day celebration in Sittway yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

## Japan's Oshima to produce rice-drying machines next month in Myanmar

JAPAN'S Oshima Agricultural Machinery MFG. Co. will begin producing rice-drying machines as early as March in Myanmar, one of the world's major rice producers.

Its first overseas factory, located in the Thilawa Special Economic Zone on the outskirts of Yangon, has an annual output capacity of 100 units and aims to sell 10 machines in the first year, Chairman Nobuhiko Oshima, who attended the plant's opening ceremony, told NNA Business News on 7 February. The company is tapping business opportunities in Southeast Asia's emerging economies as it faces a shrinking domestic market as the number of farmers and overall population decline

in Japan.

The rice-drying process prior to milling in Myanmar is labor-intensive as farmers leave rice on vinyl sheets on the ground to expose it to sunlight. Oshima, based in Niigata Prefecture, a major rice-producing region in northeastern Japan, will sell a machine capable of processing 15 tons per cycle, more than the domestic model's 10 tons, with a suggested \$35,000 price tag via a local agent to rice-milling firms.

Myanmar is ranked seventh globally in rice production, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, but it lags behind other major rice-growing neighbors such as Thailand and Viet Nam in the mechanization of the pro-



Farmers collect paddy after drying them under the sun in Ayeyawady Delta. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

duction process.

In Myanmar, the amount of rice cultivation is much greater during the rainy season in its cycle of double cropping, but rain often hampers outdoor

drying and can cause a deterioration in rice quality during storage. Oshima established its local unity Oshimanoki Myanmar Co. in 2017, with a \$5.4 million investment. The plant

employs about 20 workers and has a floor space of 3,600 square meters, according to the chairman who doubles as managing director of the local arm. — Kyodo News ■

## Quality check key for legal rice exports to China: Dy Commerce Minister

By Nyein Nyein

THE MINISTRY of Commerce has forwarded a request to China, seeking a legal export channel for rice through the border gates, and so, Myanmar merchants need to make the necessary preparations for meeting China's quality standards, said U Aung Htoo, the Deputy Minister for Commerce.

He made the remarks in response to a question raised by local mediapersons at an event to mark the World Pulse Day 2019, jointly held by the Myanmar Pulses, Beans, and Sesame Seeds Merchants and the Oversea Agro Traders Association (OATA) on 10 February at the Sule Shangri-La Hotel.

"The Ministry of Commerce has conducted negotiations with China to export Myanmar's rice legally to China via border gates. China has demanded we pass its food safety inspection mechanism — the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection, and Quarantine (AQSIQ)," he said. "China seems to be controlling illegal trade flow through the border areas. The AQSIQ certificate is required for legitimate exports. Those engaged in the supply chain need to take necessary measures," said the deputy minister. "As

China is tightly controlling illegal exports, we have to get ready for AQSIQ approval and other taxation matters," the minister added.

Additionally, there is a plan to create a barter system for Sino-Myanmar border trade, according to the Ministry of Commerce. "We are trying to adopt the barter trade system, where participants in a transaction can directly exchange goods or services for other goods or services. We can export rice and broken rice through barter trade. Broken rice has a better chance in that trade system. We will work towards that system," said U Aung Htoo. "Since mid-October 2018, China has been confiscating illegal rice inflows. As a result of this, border rice exports have plunged drastically," said U Min Thein, the vice chair of Muse depot.

In the April-December period last year, Myanmar exported over 1.7 million tons of rice, a drop of over 800,000 tons compared with the corresponding period of 2017, according to data from the Myanmar Rice Federation. In the 2017-2018FY, Myanmar shipped over 3.6 million tons of rice, half of which entered China through the border trade channels. (Translated by Ei Myat Mon) ■

## No. of migrant workers hits 5 mln

LOW EMPLOYMENT rate and low salaries in the domestic market have forced young workers in Myanmar to seek jobs overseas, with the number of migrant labourers touching 5 million, said an official from the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, and Population (MOLIP).

A majority of the labourers are working in Thailand, he added. "Young people are struggling to find jobs in the domestic market. Fewer job opportunities and low pay are making them leave their home country for higher-paying jobs overseas. There is economic disadvantage from loss of young workers," said U Myo Aung, the permanent secretary of MOLIP.

Currently, about 3 million young people of working age are working in Thailand, but most of them are low-paid manual labourers, he said.

Additionally, some workers have gone to Malaysia, Singapore, China, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar, and other Asian and European Union countries. Myanmar's migrant labour force now totals about 5 million, he said.

The daily minimum wage in Thailand is 310 baht (equivalent to Ks15,000), while the minimum wage in Myanmar is just Ks4,800, according to the MOLIP.

Most of Myanmar's marine workers from Taninthayi and Ayeyawady regions and Mon

and Kayin states are migrating to work in Thailand's fishing industry. According to a list shared by it, Thailand has over 1,45,000 Myanmar migrant workers, with over 40,000 employed as marine workers, over 45,000 employed in fishing and related enterprises, and over 51,000 working in fishery products processing factories. Thailand wants to recruit more Myanmar marine workers through a legal labour exchange system. The labour ministry is making concerted efforts to create more employment opportunities through an online labour exchange management system. — Myint Maung Soe/ GNLM ■

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

## Animal products exports touch \$243 mln in first four months of this FY

Myanmar's exports of animal products between 1 October and 2 February in the current financial year touched US\$243.3 million, a sharp increase compared with the corresponding period in the 2017-2018FY, when income from livestock trade was registered below \$26 million.

Animal products exports are mainly driven by the private sector, with income from the public sector amounting to less than \$1 million.

At present, cattle exports to

China are on the decline owing to suspension of trade in the Chinese New Year, said Mandalay cattle exporters.

Only some companies, which had made purchase agreements in advance, traded in recent days. Most export companies have suspended trading. The demand this year is seen higher than last year. A large cow is selling for over Ks2 million, while a small one is priced below K2 million.

Livestock trade was allowed

in late 2017, and exports are expected to rise. Myanmar is exploring new export markets for cattle.

The exported cattle are above five years old with vaccination certificates, health certificates, and farming registration certificates. According to the 2018 cattle census, there is a total of 11.5 million herds of cattle in the country. An increase in export value of the animal products group can help reduce trade deficit. — Ko Htet ■

## Republic of the Union of Myanmar

## Office of the President

## Press Release No. 6/2019

7<sup>th</sup> Waxing of Tabodwe, 1380 ME  
(11 February 2019)

## Additional statistical bulletin on drug seizures, acting on information

1. In order to prevent and eradicate the dangers of narcotic drugs and psychotropic drugs, the Office of the President has formed the **Drug Activity Special Complaint Department** on 26 June 2018 to systematically accept and respond to reports on drug abuses and other related cases from the general public.
2. With orders from the Office of the President, the Drug Activity Special Complaint Department relayed information on reports on drug-related offenses up to 9 February 2019 to the Ministry of Home Affairs to take action, as displayed below:

No	Nature of report	Details on seizure and legal action taken
1	Information received of Kyaw Lwin Oo, living in Thayet Kyin Village, Dabayin Tsp, Sagaing Region, selling illegal drugs.	On 6-2-2019, police searched the house owned by Kyaw Lwin Oo, aged 40, son of U Maung Shwe, and seized stimulant tablets bearing 88/1 letter.  A case has been opened against him with MaMaSa (Dabayin), Ma Ya (Pa)1/2019 under Section 16(C)/20(a) of the Anti-Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.
2	Information received of Ma Kyi Khin, Sai Aung and Aung Shein, living in Zin Village, Kanbalu Tsp, Sagaing Region, selling illegal drugs.	On 9-2-2019, police searched the house owned by Ma Kyi Khin, aged 44, daughter of U Tun Aung, Sai Aung (a) Chit Sai Aung, aged 25, son of U Cho Lay, Aung Shein, aged 33, son of U Myat Han, and Kyaw Myo (a) Kyaw Myu, aged 29, son of U Kan Htoo seized stimulant tablets bearing WY tablets, black opium and heroin together with them.  A case has been opened against them with MaMaSa(Kanbalu), MaYa(Pa)1/2019 under Section 19(a), MaYa(Pa)2/2019 under Section 16(C) and MaMaSa (Kanbalu) Ma Ya (Pa) 4/2019 under section 16 (c)/20(a)/21 of the Anti-Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.
3	Information received of Ma San Shwe, living Wunzin Ward 3, Unit 6, Meiktila Tsp, Mandalay Region, selling and distributing illegal drugs.	On 3-2-2019, police searched Moe Htet Maung (a) Pho Tarte, aged 19, son of U Myo Min Tun in Wunzin Ward 3, and seized stimulant tablets bearing 88/1 tablets. Police got a tip that he bought it from Ma San Shwe, aged 48, daughter of U Pan Yin, and seized stimulant tablets bearing 88/1 tablets with her.  A case has been opened against them with NaMaSa 2 (Meiktila) MaYa (Pa)3/2019 under Section 16(C)/21 and with NaMaSa(2) (Meiktila), MaYa (Pa)4/2019 under Section 19(a)/20(a) of the Anti-Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.
4	Information received of selling illegal drugs in Aung San and Ba Htoo Streets, 52x53 Street, Pyigyidagun Tsp, Mandalay Region.	On 8-2-2019, police searched house of Daw Ei Ei Moe(a) Moe Moe, aged 51, daughter of U Tin Win, who absconded from her house, and seized Ma Moe Moe, aged 30, daughter of U Win Ngwe, Than Naing Oo, aged 45, son of U Toe Shein, Moe Thout (a) Kyawl Gyee (a) Kyaw Thet Swe, aged 19, son of U San Hlaing, Thet Naing Oo (a) Ange Lay, aged 39, son of U Pyone, and Thet Swe Oo (a) Fattee, aged 38, son of U Hla Thaw, together with heroin.  A case has been opened against five of them with MaMaSa (Pyigyidagun) MaYa (Pa) 3/2019 under Section 16 (c)/20(a)/21 of the Anti-Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.
5	Information received of selling illegal drugs in 19 <sup>th</sup> x19 <sup>th</sup> Streets, Aungmyethazan Tsp, Mandalay Region.	On 6-2-2019, police seized Soe Naung Nyein (a) Nga Sai, aged 25, son of U Tun Nyein, with heroin.  A case has been opened with MaMaSa (Aungmyethazan) MaYa (Pa) 5/2019 under Section 16/C of the Anti-Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.
6	Information received of selling illegal drugs in Thagondine Village, Mudon Tsp, Mon State.	On 3-2-2019, police seized Toe Aung, aged 28, son of U Pe Tin, and Wai Yan, aged 24, son of U Aung Min Htin, together with stimulant tablets bearing WY letters.  A case has been opened with MaMaSa (Mudon) MaYa(Pa)5/2019 under Section 16(C)/21 of the Anti-Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.
7	Information received of selling illegal drugs in Hta Ward, North Okkalapa, Yangon Region.	So far, one case has been opened files as of last weeks, a man had been arresting and police seized him with stimulant tablets.  On 8-2-2019, police seized Rupa (a) Lupa, aged 39, son of U Pat Tar, with stimulant tablets bearing WY letters.  A case has been opened with MaMaSa (Waibage) MaYa(Pa)14/2019 under Section 19(a) of the Anti-Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.
8	Information received of Thiha Aung (a) Pant Tu, living at No. 504/Ka, Bominkhaung Park 2 <sup>nd</sup> Street, Ward 8, Shwepyitha Tsp, Yangon Region, distributing and selling illegal drugs.	On 9-2-2019, police searched for Thiha Aung (a) Pan Tu, aged 26, son of U Thein Win Soe in his house and he absconded, and seized Waiyan Phyo (a) Ange Kaung, aged 29, son of U Shein Myint, together with stimulant tablets bearing WY letters.  A case has been opened with MaMaSa (Shwepyitha) MaYa(Pa) 5/2019 under Section 19(a) / 20(a)/21 of the Anti-Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.
9	Information receiving of people selling illegal drugs on the hill of Group 10, Ward 4, Kutkai Tsp, Shan State.	So far, 41 cases have been opened files as of last weeks, a total of 45 people, including 41 men and 4 women, had been arresting, and police seized them with heroin and stimulant tablets.  On 6-2-2019, police Yone Shwe (a) Lin Shwe, aged 25, son of U Yanlieain, Khin Maung (a) Kalein, aged 65, son of U Arkal, and Kyaw Tun, aged aged 40, son of U Bo, together with stimulant tablets bearing 88/1 tablets.  Cases have been opened against them with MaMaSa (Kutkai) MaYa (Pa)15/2019, under section 19 (a), and MaMaSa(Kutkai) MaYa (Pa) 16/2019 under Section 19(a)/21 of the of the Anti-Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.
10	Information received of selling narcotic drugs in Paya Phyu Ward, Taunggyi Tsp, Shan State.	So far, 8 cases have been opened files as of last weeks, a total of 17 men had been caught together with heroin, stimulant tablets and poppy blocks.  On 8-02-2019, police seized Hawyarsho, aged 55, son of U Haw Sai Shaw, together with stimulant tablets and poppy blocks.  A case has been opened against him with NaMaSa(Taunggyi) MaYa(Pa) 16/2019 under Section 19(a) of the Anti-Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.

- 3 .Out of the information sent to the Ministry of Home Affairs, so far a total of 505 cases have been opened files as of 9-2-2019. A total of 792 people, including 664 men and 128 women had been arrested with seizures of 5,699.22 g of heroin, 67.14 g of ICE, 38,607.94 g of opium, 329.6 g of low-quality opium, 18,795.28 g of speciosa powder, 7,273.99 g of speciosa, 213,541stimulant tablets, 4,668.27 g of marijuana, 0.1 liters of opium tincture, 378.06 g of opium blocks, 60 g of poppy seeds, 3.45 g of crushed stimulant tablet powder, 0.001 g of crushed ecstasy powder, 16 firearms, 257 bullets and one grenade. Efforts for fighting the drug trafficking has been stepped up and the ministry will report on further exposed cases.

4. In addition to the investigations and arrests conducted on drug related complaints mentioned above, the Tatmadaw and Myanmar Police Force have also carried out separate investigations on drug complaints, search and arrests at border gates, and searches of vehicles acting upon given information. During the previous week, multiple arrests were made in the border regions and joint-surveillance gates.

Six men, living in Taungoolwin Village, Hopin Tsp, Kachin State, were seized with 585 stimulant tablets and 10.94 g of heroin. A woman, lived in Ward 3, Phakant Tsp, Kachin State, was seized with 39 stimulant tablets and 5 g of opium blocks. A woman, living in Aungyar Village, Kachin State, was arrested with 840 stimulant tablets and 21.5 g of opium blocks. Two men from Ywartanshay Village, Loikaw Tsp, Kayah State, were seized with 193 stimulant tablets and two motorcycles. A man who lives in Nantkwet Ward, Kayah State, was seized with 1550 stimulant tablets and one motorcycle. A man on the motorcycle was seized with 249 stimulant tablets and one motorcycle in Hpa-an Tsp, Kayin State. Two men from Shwemyingthiri Ward, Mawlamyine, Mon State, were seized with 172 stimulant tablets and one motorcycle. Two men were seized with 730 stimulant tablets and two motorcycles at the Toetetaung Bus Terminal, Myauku, Rakhine State. A man was arrested with 160 stimulant tablets and one three-wheel-vehicle in Letkaukzay Ward. A man was seized with 92 stimulant tablets in Yadanathiri Ward, Taunggyi Tsp, Lashio Tsp, Shan State. A man was seized with 1260 stimulant tablets, 30 g of heroin in Nyaungphyu Station Ward, Shan State. A man was arrested with 1991.6 g of opium blocks and a motorcycle on the road of Meihan Village, Shan State. A man was seized with 2000 stimulant tablets and one motorcycle on the Tangyan-Lashio road, Tongyan Tsp, Shan State. Three men were arrested with 1930 stimulant tablets, 40 g of heroin and one car in Muse, Shan State. A man was arrested with 2800 stimulant tablets in Weinnan Village, Shan State. A man was seized with 4490 stimulant tablets in Hopot Village, Shan State. A man was arrested with 42000 stimulant tablets and one motorcycles in Naungbyit Village, Kutkai Tsp Shan State. A woman was arrested with 2765 stimulant tablets and one motorcycle on Momeik-Mabein Highway, Shan State. 32500 g of heroin, 1500 g of ICE, 7.4 g of ecstasy powder, 16000 g of low-quality opium, 24000 g of Brown Charcoal, 62 liters of Phosphoric Acid, 4000 g of chemical powder, 14 liters of liquid chemicals, 1000 of Carbon and 34 kinds of things to make drugs\*. Two men were arrested with 3837.55 g of heroin, one motorcycle near Mawlin Village, Pinleibu Tsp, Sagaing Region. A man was seized with 100 g of heroin, one motorcycle near Latha Village, Khanti Tsp, Sagaing Region. A man was arrested with 2375 stimulant tablets in Parami Ward 2, Myeik Tsp, Thaninthayi Region. Three men was arrested with 42 stimulant tablets at Zay Ward, Thanatpin Tsp, Bago Region. A man was arrested with 28 stimulant tablets in Thegone Village, Myaing Tsp, Magway Region. Three men, from Mahaangmyay Tsp, Mandalay region, were arrest-

ed with 1895 stimulant tablets and 5 g of marijuana. A woman was arrested with 1917 stimulant tablets on Mogok-Momeik Road, Mandalay Region. A man was arrested with 10900 stimulant tablets in Latpan Village, Kyaukse Tsp, A man was seized with 1310 stimulant tablets and one motorcycle near Tonlon village. One man and one woman were arrested with 2960 stimulant tablets in Hlaingthayar Tsp, Yangon Region. Two men were arrested with 7305 stimulant tablets in Thagangyun Tsp, Yangon Region. A man was seized with 1000 stimulant tablets in North Okkalapa Tsp, Yangon Region. A man was arrested with 725 stimulant tablets in Thakayta Tsp, Yangon Region.

There have been three arrests involving foreigners. Two illegal Thai men were seized with 180 stimulant tablets and 0.25 g of ICE in Tachileik. One Thai man entering was seized with 6 stimulant tablets and 6.52 g of ICE from Meikaung Ward. Moreover an Indian man entering Myanmar, Tamu Tsp, Sagaing Region was caught with 84 stimulant tablets. There were two seizures of ammunitions. A man was seized with 19000 stimulant tablets, 300 g of heroin, 30 g of brown opium powder, 210 go of ICE, five revolvers, 94 bullets, two bullet caskets, one vehicle in Tachileik Tsp, Shan State. A woman was seized with 138 stimulant tablets, one gun, 18 cartridges and two pairs of detonators in Dawei Tsp, Taninthayi Region. Two men were arrested with 200 stimulant tablets, one motorcycle in Thaninthayi Region. A woman was seized with 1760 stimulant tablets in Longlon Tsp, Thaninthayi Region.

5. There have been 197 cases being opened between 3-2-2019 and 9-2-2019, and totaling 272 people, including 247 men and 25 women, have been arrested. Seizures were made of 3, 3212.6678 g of heroin, 1721.77 g of ICE, 16,000 g of low-quality opium, 4213.75 g of opium, 30 g of brown heroin, 12,2989 g of stimulant tablets, 7.4 g of speciosa powder, 24.4 g of marijuana, 2018.1 g of opium blocks, 24,000 g of Brown Charcoal, 62 g of Phosphoric Acid, 4,000 g of powder chemicals, 14 liter of Toluene, 1,000 g of Carbon, 34 kinds of chemicals that can make drugs, 6 guns, 112 cartridges, 2 bullet caskets and two sets of detonator.

To seize further drugs and to arrest drugs dealers, people are urged to inform the Ministry of Home Affairs, region and state governments and to inform huge cases of drug trafficking and other suspicious cases directly to the Drug Activity Special Complaint Department of the Office of the President via following contact numbers:

#### Contacts

Auto Telephone No. — 067-590200  
Fax Phone No. — 067-590233  
Email Address — [antinarcotics@presidentoffice.gov.mm](mailto:antinarcotics@presidentoffice.gov.mm)

## Malaysian company to invest in furniture factory in Bago Region

By Aye Yamone

A Malaysia-based company will set up an acacia mangium furniture factory in Bago Region, with plans to purchase around 3,000 tons of acacia mangium per year, according to the Myanmar Acacia Mangium Production Association (Temporary).

The association will supply the raw material, acacia mangium, for the furniture factory. Currently, it is conducting a feasibility study to find out if it can purchase enough acacia mangium across the country to keep up supply.

“A few days ago, a Malaysian furniture company came to meet us to invest in a furniture factory in Myanmar. They are planning to construct a small furniture factory in Bago

Region. So, we will be responsible for ensuring sufficient supply of the raw material. Currently, we are conducting a survey. The factory needs around 3,000 tons of acacia mangium per year. We are negotiating a deed of sale, under which our selling price will be fixed at the prevailing market rate,” said U Myo Ko Ko Thein, the chairman of the Myanmar Acacia Mangium Production Association (Temporary).

With 50 per cent of its forest growers planting the tree, Viet Nam exports 8 million tons of acacia mangium annually. The export price is US\$1,100 per ton.

Myanmar needs to plant more acacia mangium as it has a high demand in foreign countries, said U Myo Ko Ko Thein. “Growing acacia man-

gium, known in Myanmar as mangiumcia, can help in environmental conservation. Acacia mangium plantations are thinned at five and eight years, and the trees are harvested between 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> year. We will take time to conduct the survey because our association was formed very recently. So, we don’t have branch offices in the regions. We are conducting the survey online and through neighbors. The survey period will be two months. We don’t have enough acacia mangium to make the finished product — the furniture. The Malaysian company will make their investment this year,” he said.

“If the company can get sufficient supply of acacia mangium in Myanmar, they will construct more factories

in other states and regions. To make finished products with acacia mangium, Myanmar needs to have a supply of 15,000 acres of acacia mangium per year,” he said.

Members of the Myanmar Acacia Mangium Production Association (Temporary) visited Viet Nam on 4 January to explore the market for finished products made from acacia mangium, and to study the production technology. The association has also invited Viet Nam to cooperate with them. Although Myanmar has imported acacia mangium seeds from India during the last 10 years, the production of acacia mangium was poor due to lack of public awareness, said U Myo Ko Ko Thein.

“There are over 30,000 acres of acacia mangium

plantations in Myanmar. We can export acacia mangium if we extend its acreage. Acacia mangium can be used to make flooring, A4 paper, and other personal goods,” he added.

(Translated by Hay Mar)

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# We must safeguard our future male generation

WHERE have all the men gone? This is a frequent question heard in Myanmar. According to the 2014 Population and Housing Census, there were 51 million people in Myanmar, including 25 million males and 26 million females. The population has since increased to 54 million, and we estimate the male to female ratio from five years ago will remain unchanged.

The 2014 census also reports that there are 21.87 million people over 15 years of age who are employed. Further surveys reveal 5.8 per cent of males and 6.7 per cent of females from this demographic

are working in the public sector; 35.3 per cent of males and 28.8 per cent of females are working in the private sector; 5.8 per cent of males and 3.5 per cent of females are employers, and 10.9 per cent of males and 26.1 per cent of females are working in family businesses. It is vital that we brainstorm on methods to keep school-age boys in school long enough to complete their formal and vocational educations, and become valuable citizens.

From this, we can see that there are more females working in the public sector and family businesses. We can also see there are a larger number of males working in the private sector, owning businesses and as employers, compared to females. The charts in the survey show there are 74,000 males working in the education sector, compared to the 300,000 females. But even realistically, we can see there are more females taking the role of both teacher and student in the classroom. This can be an issue in the future for the nation's human resource development.

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi also remarked on this fact during her recent visit to Taunggyi, Shan State. She said fewer and fewer boys were completing their high school educations, while more females were entering universities. She noted that we cannot ignore this, as those males who have not received sufficient education can become serious issues for society in the future. We agree with the State Counsellor and urge everyone to collaborate on solving this potential long-term problem.

It is vital that we brainstorm on methods to keep school-age boys in school long enough to complete their formal and vocational educations, and become valuable citizens. While a lack of formal education may not always result in a descent to anarchy, the social contracts and moral lessons learned in a holistic school environment can contribute much to a person's integrity and character development.



# The Bonfire Festival of Tabodwe

By Maha Saddhamma Jotika Dhaja, Sithu Dr. Khin Maung Nyunt

TABODWE the eleventh month of Myanmar Lunar Calendar of 12 months is spelt and its meaning is interpreted different in Myanmar literary history. Most outstanding examples are two. Firstly it was spelt ထန်းတဲး [Yoke hung]. In this month all field and farm agricultural activities are over. Therefore yokes are at rest. They are hung at the houses. So it is the month of yoke being hung. Secondly, Toddy palm trees which grow wild or are planted across the country are very useful. Every part of a toddy palm tree is used in building, roofing, making domestic furniture and human facilities-mats, baskets, sun shades etc. Its fruits, juice and shells are eaten raw or boiled down to get balls of sugar called htan-nyet [gagary] the fresh juice is drunk for hygiene and fermented juice is drunk as liquor. Fermented toddy juice is as intoxicating as or more than Scotch whisky.

The second name of the month is Htan but we ထန်းတဲး [the bunch of tender tooty fruits is pressed down so as to collect drops of its juice in the container earthen pot htan yey oh (ထန်းရေခွံး) specially made for this purpose. The toddy climber who is well trained by daily usage to carry a ladder, the pot and a sharp knife to the job early morning to noon time. He presses down with his legs the bunch of tender toddy fruits right on



A team takes part in a htamane festival at Shwedagon Pagoda. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

the month of toddy juice earthen pot. So in this month bunches of toddy fruits are pressed down to remain hanging. Here the name "ထန်းတဲးလဲ" .

In Myanmar there are some rhymed couplets to describe the outstanding nature of every month or year. နှာရည်ယိုတဲ့ တပို့တဲ့ ထီးဝမ်းပေါက်တဲ့ တပို့တဲ့ ထီးပုံဆင်နွဲ့ တပို့တဲ့ and ထမန့်ထိုးပွဲတပို့တဲ့, loosely translated into English. In Dabodwe, wild plum fruits are ripen open. Bonfire

festival in Tabodwe and concocting htamane delicacy festival in Tabodwe.

Of the above rhymed couplets, Bonfire festival ထီးပုံဆင်နွဲ့ တပို့တဲ့, should be explained first. Traditionally celebrated festival in this month is the bonfire festival. Its history goes back to the life time of Lord Gotama Buddha. While residing at a Vihara [Monastery] close to the Himalayan Mountain Ranges. Buddha felt extreme cold of one winter night. He used all three robes to get

warmth. As the night advanced, the three robes could not protect Lord Buddha from cold. As Vinaya [Priestly Disciplines] do not allow more than three robes to wear, he made a fire to get warmth. When day broke, cold was more intense. Luckily the Sun came out. So he stayed in the sunshine to get warmth.

Myanmar Buddhists offered bonfire for warmth on an earthen circular open container ထီးလင်းဖို to Buddha statues, old monks and the aged parents or relatives to provide warmth. So the traditional festival of this month is bonfire [for warmth] offering festival on the full moon night of this month. It is believed that only after this festival, cold is reduced.

The festival of concocting Myanmar delicacy Htamane [ထမနဲ] is also quite a festive activity of Myanmar people. It is in fact one of Myanmar New Crop Consuming Festivals [တောက်သစ်တပွဲ] which all Myanmar ethnic nationalities hold and celebrate at their villages in their own traditional manner.

Htamane concoction is a communal activity in which Myanmar people of all age groups have to participate. Both males and females of old age, middle age, young ages including chil-



The htamane delicacy is prepared for donation. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

Jewels the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sanghas. Next to the Aged, Parents and Teachers. Finally it is a free for all to enjoy. After you enjoy the delicacy to your hearts' content or full capacity of your belly, you can take away the banana packed delicacy. Good htamane delicacy can last long.

Myanmar traditional medicine men highly recommend all age groups to eat the delicacy in winter. Body skin dries up due to extreme cold. You need oil to heal your dried skin. Htamane delicacy gives you oil to heal your dried skin. The recipe of making htamane delicacy is in the form of the following rhymed poetic lines called Tay-htat တေးထံ. For lack of space the writer withholds reproducing it in Myanmar. He gives his loose English translation.

"Take 4 pyi from a basket of nice glutinous rice and wash them clean with fresh water. Put one viss of pure sesamum oil in a big iron pan which is placed on a wood fire, fry 3 ticals weight of ginger slices in the oil and stir it thoroughly. Add some water to it and knead with big long wooden lades. When the glutinous rice gets grilled with oil oozing out of it reduce the fire. Spray on the glutinous rice in the pan 80 ticals weight of fried ground nuts, 32 ticals weight of roasted sesamum seeds, 20 ticals weight of shredded coconut kernel, and 7 ticals weight of salt are sprayed on the stuff. Then knead, press and crush the stuff in the pan again and again with long wooden lades by muscular hands of young men. Taste it to test if the stuff has attained the standard quality. If so, the htamane delicacy is put on the banana leaves, ladleful by ladleful".

Preparation of htamane provides a social occasion for Myanmar Community. If contest is held, the winner partings will make a jubilant round of rejoice of their victories with music dance and songs in the compounds of monasteries or precincts of Pagodas. Sometimes even old aged participate in such rejoicing activities. Universities, Colleges and schools used to hold such kind of communal activities, in which both teachers and students of all ethnic nationals of all religious faiths merrily participate.

When the judges examine the concocted delicacy they make three standards the best, better and good. Lumps of delicacy are put on banana leaves on the table. First to offer to three



Weather icons and Myanmar Daily Weather Report (Issued on Tuesday 12 February 2019)

SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS RECORDED AT 09:30 hrs MST: During the past (24) hours, rain or thundershowers have been isolated in Taninthayi Region and Mon State. Weather has been generally fair in Mandalay and Yangon regions, Northern Shan and Kayin states and partly cloudy in the remaining regions and states. Night temperatures were (2°C) above February average temperatures in Lower Sagaing and Bago regions, (Southern and Eastern) Shan, Kayah and Kayin states, (3°C) above February average temperature in Mon State and about February average temperature in the remaining regions and states. The significant night temperatures were (2°C) in Haka, (4°C) in Hsipaw, (5°C) in Heho and (7°C) each in Putao, Namhsan, Pinlaung, Loinin, Ramthlo and Mogok. The noteworthy amount of rainfall recorded was Dawei (1.26) inches.

BAY INFERENCE: Weather is a few cloud over the Andaman Sea and South Bay and generally fair elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF 13 February 2019: Rain or thundershowers are likely to be isolated in Taninthayi Region, Kayin and Mon states. Degree of certainty is (60%). Weather will be partly cloudy in Upper Sagaing, Bago, Yangon and Ayeyawady regions, Kachin and Chin states and generally fair in the remaining regions and states.

STATE OF THE SEA: Sea will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (3-5) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Slight decrease of night temperatures in Eastern Myanmar areas.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 13 February 2019: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 13 February 2019: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 13 February 2019: Generally fair weather.

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## Invitation to young writers for Sunday Special

The Global New Light of Myanmar is accepting submissions of poetry, opinion, articles, essays and short stories from young people for its weekly Sunday Next Generation Platform. Interested candidates can send their work to the Global New Light of Myanmar at No. 150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon, in person, or by email to ce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com with the following information: (1) Sector you wish to be included in (poetry, opinion, etc.), (2) Own name and (if different) your penname, (3) Your level of education, (4) Name of your School/College/University, (5) A written note of declaration that the submitted piece is your original work and has not been submitted to any other news or magazine publishing houses, (6) A color photo of the submitter, (7) Copy of your NRC card, (8) Contact information (email address, mobile number, etc.). - Editorial Department, The Global New Light of Myanmar

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Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish "Letter to the Editor" that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 words please be aware that your letter will be edited.

## Fullmoon of Tabodwe to be designated as Myanmar Thanakha Day

MYANMAR Thanakha Planters, Producers and Exporters Association will designate the Fullmoon of Tabodwe (19 February, 2019) as the Myanmar Thanakha Day and will promote the traditional cosmetic paste made from Thanakha trees.

"On the Fullmoon of



Customers observe Thanakha barks at a shop. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR



Thanakha is Myanmar's traditional cosmetic made from bark of Thanakha tree. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

Tabodwe, we will conduct talks on Thanakha at Myaing, Yes-aygo, Ayadaw and Shwebo townships where Thanakha is mainly produced" said U Win Maung, Secretary of MTPPEA.

The reason why the Fullmoon of Tabodwe is designated as the Myanmar Thanakha Day is the sales of Thanakha is high in this month as there are many traditional festivals in this month, he added.

The association was formed on 11 November in 2017 with 150 members.

The association is producing Thanakha based value added products to find foreign market.

The traditional cosmetic trees are mainly grown in central Myanmar and there are about 300,000 acres of Thanakha trees in the whole country. —Myint Maung Soe

(Translated by GNLM)

## Cigarette sparks fire, 2-storey dwelling gutted in Nyaungshwe

A TWO-STOREY semi-pucca dwelling in Nandawun Ward-6, Nyaungshwe Town, was destroyed in a fire around 5:30 a.m. on 12 February. The fire reportedly started after a resident accidentally let cigarette ash fall on a bed. There were no casualties.

The two-storey building, located on the corner of the Agricultural Bank on Khayay-1 Road, was rented out to Daw Myint Myint Aye, 56. She was residing with her father U Myint Oo, 81, who is reportedly suffering from a mental disorder.

According to investigators, the fire broke out when U Myint Oo spilled some cigarette ash on a bed. The resulting blaze completely engulfed the two-storey structure. It was brought under control around 5:55 a.m. by firemen and local residents.

The fire damaged property to the tune of K1.2 million.

The police have filed charges against U Myint Oo under Section 285 of the Penal Code. —Sai Eh Bae (Nyaungshwe)

(Translated by Hay Mar)

## Wild elephant found dead in Thabeikkyin Township

A wild elephant was found dead on a farm near Ohn Paing Village, Thabeikkyin Township, Mandalay Region, around 5:50 pm on Saturday.

Locals found the carcass of the female elephant and alerted a combined team comprising members of the police and the township Forest Department.

The combined team arrived at the scene and examined the carcass. According to officials, the elephant was about 40 years old, and measured 9 feet in height and 11 feet in length. The carcass had

decomposed, and showed no signs of external injuries, they said. Officials found five 33-KV electric wire lines, supplied by the Zayat Kwin power station, hanging overhead, at a height of 12 feet. So, they have assigned electrocution as the preliminary cause of death. A veterinary surgeon will ascertain the cause of death soon.

The authorities have also informed the Myanma Timber Enterprise in Sintgu and the Zayat Kwin power station.

The forestry department recently offered to launch an conservation education



PHOTO-KYAW KYAW (MA HLAING)

campaign on wildlife for local residents.—Kyaw Kyaw

(Mahlaing) (Translated by Hay Mar)

# May to ask MPs for more time on Brexit talks

LONDON (United Kingdom) — Prime Minister Theresa May on Tuesday will plead with MPs to give her more time for talks with EU officials on her Brexit deal, telling them they must hold their nerve.

May is set to update parliament on her latest meetings in Brussels and Dublin aimed at securing a divorce agreement with the EU, with Britain due to leave the bloc on 29 March.

“The talks are at a crucial stage,” May will say, according to extracts from her statement to parliament released in advance by her Downing Street office.

MPs last month overwhelmingly rejected the deal struck between May and Brussels and the British premier has since been attempting to secure changes that would satisfy parliament’s lower House of Commons.

Brexiters in her Conservative Party are particularly unhappy with the so-called backstop provision intended to keep the border with Ireland free-flowing.

Some fear it could leave Britain trapped in the European Union’s trade rules with no unilateral way out — but would back a deal if the backstop was time-limited or replaced with alternative ar-

rangements.

“We now all need to hold our nerve to get the changes this house has required and deliver Brexit on time,” May is due to tell MPs.

“By getting the changes we need to the backstop; by protecting and enhancing workers’ rights and environmental protections; and by enhancing the role of parliament in the next phase of negotiations I believe we can reach a deal that this house can support.”

## Plea for time

Commons Leader Andrea Leadsom said on BBC radio that May was not simply “running down the clock” until 29 March.

“What the prime minister wants is a bit more time,” she said. She said May would promise MPs they could hold a series of votes on 27 February in an attempt to influence her Brexit strategy if she has not agreed a new deal by then.

Leadsom, responsible for bringing government business through parliament, said the talks were “pretty crucial but delicate negotiations with the EU to try to make sure that we can sort out the problem with an unlimited backstop.”



British Prime Minister Theresa May leaves after a meeting with the President of the European Council at the European Council in Brussels on 7 February, 2019. PHOTO: AFP

“It would be an extraordinary outcome if the thing that the backstop is seeking to avoid, which is a hard border in Northern Ireland, if the EU were so determined to be completely intransigent about it that they actually incur the very thing that they’re seeking to avoid by pushing the UK into a position where we leave without a deal.”

Brexit Secretary Stephen Barclay and David Lidington, May’s de facto deputy, are in Strasbourg meeting members of the European Parliament, while British Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt is in Paris as part of a diplomatic offensive.

The EU’s chief Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier has called for “clarity and movement” from Britain. In an effort to break the impasse, Barclay hosted Barnier for a working dinner at the British ambassador’s residence in Brussels late Monday, with concern growing on both sides of the Channel.

Speaking afterwards, Barnier said the talks had been “constructive”. “We are clear from our side that we are not going to reopen the withdrawal agreement, but we will continue our discussion in the coming days,” he told journalists.— AFP ■

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Acting Pentagon chief makes surprise Baghdad visit

BAGHDAD (Iraq) — Acting Pentagon chief Patrick Shanahan arrived in Baghdad on an unannounced visit on Tuesday for talks on the sensitive issue of a continued troop presence following withdrawal from neighbouring Syria.

Shanahan, who flew in from Afghanistan on his foreign tour since taking office last month, is keen to reassure Iraqi leaders after President Donald Trump angered many by saying he wanted to keep troops at the Al-Asad airbase, northwest of Baghdad, to keep an eye on Iran.—AFP ■

### Armoured van driver disappears in France with one million euros

BOBIGNY (France) — The driver of an armoured cash delivery van disappeared outside Paris early on Monday along with an estimated one million euros, police sources told AFP.

The 28-year-old man had stopped in front of a Western Union office at around 6:00 am (0500 GMT) in Aubervilliers, a suburb just north of the capital, and stayed behind the wheel as two of his colleagues went inside. “When they came back out, the van and the driver were gone,” one of the sources said.

The van was found soon afterwards a few blocks away with its doors wide open, but the driver and the bags of cash, worth some \$1.13 million, were nowhere to be found. Swedish man jailed for death threats to ministers—AFP ■

### Swedish man jailed for death threats to ministers

STOCKHOLM, (Sweden) — A Swedish man was sentenced on Monday to eight years in jail for sending threatening letters to government ministers and for posting a booby-trapped package to a British company.

Michael Salonen, 43, was arrested in Thailand in April last year, and claims he is innocent of the crimes. But the court found that in 2017, he sent an envelope containing a white powder and threats to 21 members of the Swedish government, including Prime Minister Stefan Lofven, and to local officials and personalities from the world of culture.—AFP ■

# Venezuela’s financial accountability authority probes Guaido

CARACAS (Venezuela) — Venezuela’s office of financial accountability said on Monday it has opened an investigation into opposition leader Juan Guaido’s income.

The agency’s chief, Elvis Amoroso, said that Guaido, who has been recognized as Venezuela’s interim president by around 50 countries, “allegedly ... received money from international and national bodies without any justification.”

Amoroso, an official close to the regime of President Nicolas Maduro, whom Guaido is trying to dislodge, said the parliament speaker is suspected of having “hidden or falsified data in his declaration of assets.”

If found guilty by the state Comptroller, Guaido could face either a fine or be disqualified from public office.

A lawyer told AFP that the public prosecutor could also open a criminal case against Guaido if it’s decided that any of the accusations against him constitute a crime. The news came as Guaido

steps up his challenge to Maduro’s authority with their power struggle playing out over the issue of humanitarian aid.

Maduro has overseen an economic meltdown in oil-rich Venezuela, where millions of people are suffering from a lack of basic necessities and failing public services. Guaido is trying to bring in desperately-needed food and medicines currently stored just over the border in Colom-

bia, while his aides announced on Monday that agreement has been reached to open a second collection center in Brazil.

So far, Venezuela’s military, which has repeatedly pledged loyalty to Maduro, is preventing the Colombian-based aid from entering the country.

Analysts have said Guaido’s position would be strengthened if he successfully brings in aid and he has frequently called on the

military to switch sides.

He is trying to force out Maduro so he can set up a transitional government ahead of new elections. Amoroso said the investigation into Guaido following numerous complaints against the National Assembly president, without specifying who made them. He said Venezuela’s constitution “establishes that National Assembly deputies are full-time, they cannot receive any type of payment from other work, either public or private.”

The Supreme Court, dominated by regime loyalists, stripped the National Assembly of its powers in 2016, effectively sidelining the opposition-controlled legislative body.

Venezuela lurched into a political crisis when Guaido proclaimed himself acting president on 23 January after parliament declared Maduro a “usurper.”

A week later, the Supreme Court banned Guaido from leaving the country and froze his assets, accusing him of “usurping” Maduro’s functions.— AFP ■



Juan Guaido, Venezuela’s National Assembly leader and self-proclaimed acting president, is in a test of wills with President Nicolas Maduro. PHOTO: AFP

# Cambodia not to exchange independence, sovereignty for foreign aid: PM

PHNOM PENH — Cambodian Prime Minister Samdech Techo Hun Sen said on Tuesday that the country will not exchange its independence and sovereignty for foreign aid and urged countries not to interfere in Cambodia's internal affairs.

"Cambodia cannot depend on foreign aid only and Cambodia will not exchange its independence and sovereignty for anything," he said in a Facebook post.

"But we want to be good friends with other countries who really want to see Cambodia develops further and who do not interfere in the country's internal affairs," Hun Sen said.

The comments came a day after the European Union started an 18-month process that could lead to the temporary suspension of Cambodia's preferential access to the EU market under the Everything But Arms

(EBA) trade scheme due to concerns over human rights and labor rights in the country.

The European Commission, which coordinates trade policy for the EU, said in the statement that the decision will be published in the *EU Official Journal* on 12 February, kicking off the process that would run until August 2020.

EU Commissioner for Trade Cecilia Malmstrom said: "It should be clear that today's move is neither a final decision nor the end of the process. But the clock is now officially ticking and we need to see real action soon."

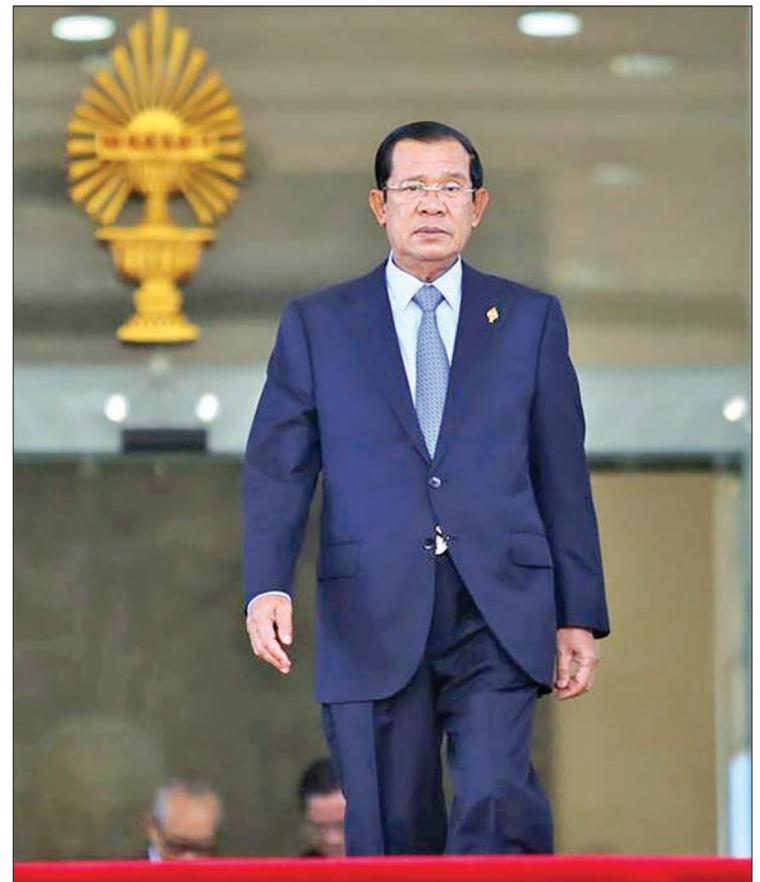
EU is a major trading partner for Cambodia, especially for textiles and footwear sector. As a Least Developed Country, Cambodia has enjoyed exports of all products, except arms and ammunition, to European markets with zero per cent tariff

since 2001.

According to an EU's data, Cambodia exported products to the bloc worth about 4.9 billion euros in 2018.

The garment and footwear sector employed around 700,000 workers, mostly from rural areas, of which 80 per cent of women. The Garment Manufacturers Association in Cambodia (GMAC) issued a statement late on Monday, urging the EU to carefully evaluate the social and economic impact on Cambodian workers of EBA suspension.

"GMAC calls upon the European Commission and EU member states to thoroughly assess whether such a procedure potentially resulting in the suspension of preferential tariff arrangements under the EBA programme would be proportionate and ultimately strengthen democracy and human rights in Cambodia," the statement



Cambodian Prime Minister Samdech Techo Hun Sen. PHOTO: XINHUA

said. It noted that the suspension of EBA will increase tariffs by 12 per cent in the garment sector and by 8 to 17 per cent for footwear products. "The competitiveness of our sector will unduly be put at risk, the reputation of our industry will be harmed, and

Cambodia's development will be halted," the statement said.

"GMAC also urges the EU to continue engaging with Cambodian authorities to find a responsible political solution for all parties during that timeframe," it added.—Xinhua ■

## Scales of justice: Indonesia police probe snake interrogation

JAYAPURA (Indonesia) — Indonesian authorities on Monday launched an investigation after a police force chief admitted an officer wrapped a live snake around a terrified suspect in a bid to force a confession.

Shocking viral footage emerged online showing an alleged pickpocket — handcuffed and sitting on the floor barefoot — screaming hysterically as another officer shouts abuse at a police

station in restive Papua province. "How many times have you stolen a mobile phone?" he yells at the unidentified suspected thief, who appears to be cowering in fear.

"Only two times," the suspect says in response.

At one stage, the officer appears to try to shove the snake into the man's mouth, while others are heard laughing in the background during the undated video. "An officer is now being

questioned by Papua police internal affairs division," Papua police spokesman Ahmad Mustofa Kamal told AFP Monday.

He did not identify the officer or say if others present would be investigated. Tonny Ananda Swadaya, the police chief in Jayawijaya district, where the incident took place, apologised in a statement on Sunday.

But he added that the suspect was not in physical danger

from the snake. "The snake was tame and not poisonous or dangerous and the incident was their own idea so they could get admission of guilt as quick as possible," Swadaya said in a statement. "We will work more professionally in the future," he added. Police did not say what kind of snake was used.

Indonesian security forces have been repeatedly accused of using excessive force and com-

mitting rights abuses against Papua's ethnic Melanesian population including extrajudicial killings of activists and peaceful protesters. Human rights lawyer Veronica Koman said the video confirmed what some jailed Papuan activists have reported in the past. "They have long known that snakes are being used by police and the military (in interrogations)," she said. "So they're not surprised" by the video.—AFP ■

## Malaysia makes record 30-tonne pangolin seizure

KUALA LUMPUR (Malaysia) — Malaysian authorities have made a record seizure of about 30 tonnes of pangolins and their scales worth some \$2 million in

raids on major processing facilities, police and environmentalists said on Tuesday.

The haul included about 1,800 boxes full of frozen pangolins

stuffed inside three refrigerated containers, 572 more frozen pangolins in six freezers, 61 live pangolins in cages, and 361 kilograms (795 pounds) of pangolin scales, according to police.

The Southeast Asian nation is battling to clamp down on rampant poaching and smuggling of pangolins, the world's most heavily trafficked mammal.

The critically endangered creatures, also known as scaly anteaters, have long been targeted as their body parts are highly valued in traditional medicine in countries including China and

Viet Nam while their meat is considered a delicacy.

Following a tip-off, wildlife officials in Sabah state raided a factory and a warehouse on Thursday, according to a statement from local police chief Omar Mammah. Police arrested a 35-year-old man suspected to have been in charge of the factory as part of an illegal syndicate.

The operation is believed to have been running for the past seven years, and police believe the pangolins were bought from poachers to be distributed locally.

Traffic, a Malaysia-based

group that monitors wildlife smuggling around the region, said it was the "biggest such bust Malaysia has seen to date".

"No threatened species can withstand industrial levels of extraction such as this," Kanitha Krishnasamy, the group's Southeast Asia director, told AFP.

The seizures also shone a light on Sabah's major role in animal trafficking — the state on Borneo island has been implicated in smuggling cases involving over 40 tonnes of pangolins since August 2017, according to Traffic.—AFP ■



Pangolin body parts are highly valued in traditional medicine in countries including China and Viet Nam while their meat is considered a delicacy. PHOTO: AFP

# The art and science of Japan's cherry blossom forecast

TOKYO (Japan) — As spring approaches in Japan, the country's weather forecasters face one of their biggest missions of the year: predicting exactly when the famed cherry blossoms will bloom.

Japan's sakura or cherry blossom season is feverishly anticipated by

locals and visitors alike. Many tourists plan their entire trips around the blooms, and Japanese flock to parks in their millions to enjoy the seasonal spectacle.

"People pay more attention to the cherry blossom season than any other flower in Japan," Ryo Dojo,

an official of the statistics unit at the Japan Meteorological Agency, told AFP.

The most basic element of predicting when the delicate pink and white petals will begin to unfurl is a large data set of temperatures. That's because the flowers will come earlier if temperatures rise quickly

in spring, Dojo said.

Conversely, if temperatures in the autumn and winter period are higher than usual, the blooms can end up being delayed.

Extreme weather can affect the trees too, with unusual patterns in 2018 prompting some blossoms to appear in October, well before the usual season.

In general, blooms begin as early as March in southern Kyushu and appear as late as May in northernmost Hokkaido.

In a bid to improve its forecasts, some outfits have started crowdsourcing data, including Weathernews, a firm in Chiba near Tokyo.

It relies on photos of buds sent in regularly by 10,000 citizens across the country who are registered on the company's website and app. "Cherry blossom forecasting is impossible for us without this sys-

tem," spokeswoman Miku Toma said. The company launched what they call the "sakura project" in 2004, signing up members who choose their own cherry tree and send pictures of its buds to the firm at regular intervals. "We realized we could see the details of how

buds grow thanks to the pictures sent to us," Toma said. "So we decided to incorporate the project to help predict blossoms."

Just observing the bud can give surprisingly accurate information about how far the flower is from full bloom.—AFP ■



In this file photo taken on 27 March, 2018 visitors row boats past cherry blossoms in full bloom in the Japanese capital Tokyo. PHOTO: AFP

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Veteran record producer Quincy Jones. PHOTO: PTI

## Quincy Jones makes history with his 28<sup>th</sup> Grammy win

LOS ANGELES — Veteran record producer Quincy Jones on Monday created history as he took home yet another Grammy with his documentary “Quincy” winning for best music film on the 2019 Grammy awards.

The win marks the 85-year-old legend’s 28<sup>th</sup> Grammy, making him the living artiste with the most trophies in Grammy history.

Jones has won Grammys in more than 10 categories over his nearly seven decade long career but his win for “Quincy” is his first in the best music film category.

The award is also his first in

17 year. His last win was in 2001 for best spoken word album, ‘Q — The Autobiography Of Quincy Jones’.

“Quincy” released on Netflix in September, focusing on Jones’ extraordinary life and achievements in both the music and film industries.

Jones’ daughter, “Parks and Recreation” actor Rashida Jones, served as co-director and co-writer on “Quincy” alongside Alan Hicks.

Late conductor Georg Solti holds the record for most Grammy wins of any artiste, winning 31 awards before his death in September 1997.—PTI ■

## No hooks, lines or sinkers: Cambodians go traditional in fishing ceremony

CHOAM KROVEAN (Cambodia) — Wielding handmade bamboo baskets and nylon nets, hundreds of people waded thigh-deep into a muddy lake in eastern Cambodia on Sunday for an annual fish-catching ceremony where only traditional tools are used.

The ceremony is held each year in eastern Tboung Khmum province after the crop harvest to commemorate the country’s proud fishing history, said local chief Uch Yoeun.

The event — held in Choam Korvean commune, about 250 kilometres (155 miles) from the capital Phnom Penh — attracts hundreds of farmers from surrounding villages.

They carry weaved baskets of different shapes, eager to try their hand at trapping the freshwater catfish and snakehead fish in the muddy Boeung Krom lake. “It has been a tradition since our ancestors’ time,” Uch Yoeun told AFP, adding that only one rule applies in this mass fishing event.

“We only allow traditional fishing tools to be used.”

Authorities guarded Boeung Krom lake for more than a month before the event — to prevent illegal fishing and ensure there would be enough to catch at Sunday’s event.

It kicked off in the early

morning with hundreds of villagers racing to the lake, sporting straw hats and traditional scarves to shield themselves from the blazing sun.

The mood was light-hearted and many opted to grill the morning’s catch by the lake over a smoldering fire. But for villagers who had attended the event for several years, the day’s haul proved disappointing.

“Before, there were bigger fish,” said Chin Khoung, 50. “Now the fish are small and there’s less (of them).”

The Southeast Asian country, which boasts the mighty Mekong river and its many tributaries, is heavily reliant on fish as a major source of protein for its population. About 40 per cent of the

population depend on fishing for their livelihoods.

But fish stocks have declined in recent years due to hydropower dams built upstream in Cambodia and neighbouring countries, and the increase of illegal fishing methods, said Om Savath, who heads the Fisheries Action Coalition Team (FACT), which promotes sustainable resource management.

Using techniques like electrocution, “they can catch a lot of fish in a short time, but it is disastrous in the long term,” Savath said. The fish-catching ceremony in Choam Krovean is important because it helps to “raise awareness in communities about the use of family methods in fishing,” he said.—AFP ■



Cambodians take part in an annual fish-catching ceremony at Choam Krovean commune in Tboung Khmum province on 10 February, 2019. PHOTO: AFP

## Spain detains guerrilla-style graffiti taggers for stopping trains

MADRID (Spain) — Spanish police said on Monday they detained 18 graffiti taggers who operated in Spain and Italy, forcing trains to a standstill so they could paint them and in one case assaulting police and security guards.

One of these taggers was placed in provisional custody and three others were banned from approaching railway facilities, police said in a statement, adding the investigation continued.

The gang made headlines in October and November last year after pulling the emergency brakes four times in Madrid’s underground tubes, forcing the carriages to stop.

In one case, they assaulted “several police agents and security agents,” the statement said. Police had for several

months been looking for the gang of taggers that operated in several Spanish regions and in Milan.

They are accused of having caused more than 650,000 euros (\$730,000) in damage.

In December 2016, police said they arrested five suspect-

ed members of another gang called the “Zorros Viejos”, or “Old Foxes.”

These operated in much the same way, and were accused of causing over 200,000 euros worth of damage to train carriages around the country.—AFP ■



Ten people, aged between 21 and 27, were arrested on suspicion of belonging to the gang. PHOTO: AFP

## Chinese film yanked from Berlin festival competition

BERLIN (Germany)—The Berlin film festival said on Monday that a new movie by acclaimed Chinese director Zhang Yimou had been pulled from the competition days before its scheduled world premiere.

The highly unusual move, which comes amid a Beijing crackdown on the domestic entertainment industry, was announced in a festival statement citing “technical difficulties encountered during post-production”. Zhang’s “Yi miao zhong” (One Second) had been scheduled to screen on Friday. It is billed as an intimate portrait of a prisoner who escaped from a labour camp during the Cultural Revolution and is on a trek to see a key newsreel in a rural village cinema.

The film’s press material noted that Zhang himself “was

sent to the country as a young man during the Cultural Revolution, an experience he has explored in many of his films”.

“In ‘Yi Miao Zhong’, the filmmaker pays homage to his medium and celebrates the cinema as a communal experience which goes beyond the film itself,” it said. The Berlinale festival, one of Europe’s top cinema showcases, said it would show an earlier Zhang work instead and that the competition for the Golden Bear top prize would now only feature 16 titles. A jury led by French Oscar winner Juliette Binoche is to pick the winner on Saturday. Two other Chinese directors, Wang Quan’an and Wang Xiaoshuai, are still in the running.

The cancellation follows another Chinese film, “Better Days”, being withdrawn last week, also for “technical reasons”.—AFP ■



PIK high-flux reactor. PHOTO: TASS

## International research at Russia's new megascience units to begin 2020

MOSCOW — International research at the megascience class research unit International Centre for Neutron Research on the basis of the high-flux reactor PIK is due to begin in 2020, as follows from materials concerning national projects published on the government's website on Monday.

International research at

another unique science unit — heavy ion collider NICA — is due in 2022.

Also, the first international research works are to be carried out by the end of 2024 at the fourth generation Synchrotron Radiation Source (ISSI-4) and the Siberian Ring Source of Photons (SKIF).

The national project Science

was drawn up in accordance with Vladimir Putin's May decree. It is to be implemented in 2018-2024.

The national project's goal is to propel Russia by 2024 into the world's top five countries of the world that conduct research and development in areas identified in accordance with science and engineering development priorities.—Tass ■

## E-cigarette use 'skyrocketing' among young Americans: official

WASHINGTON (United States) — The number of young Americans using e-cigarettes grew by 1.5 million in 2018, undermining years of progress in reducing youth smoking, health authorities said on Monday.

Some 3.6 million middle and high school students were current users of vaping products, up from 2.1 million the year before, while the number of cigarette smokers and consumption of other tobacco products remained stable, according to the report by the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

A current user is defined as a person who has used a product in the past 30 days.

"The skyrocketing growth of young people's e-cigarette use over the past year threatens to erase progress made in reducing youth tobacco use," said CDC Director Robert Redfield. "It's putting a new generation at risk for nicotine addiction."

Authorities have tightened regulations, with market leader Juul in particular coming under

particular scrutiny. "All policy options are on the table," warned Mitch Zeller, Director of the Center for Tobacco Products at the Food and Drug Administration, which regulates vaping and in November restricted the sale of certain flavours such as fruit and chewing-gum. Vaping began to take off among young Americans in the 2010s, and overtook cigarette smoking in 2014.

While the number of middle and high school cigarette smokers has been falling steadily since 2011, the number of vapers in that group has increased dramatically, from 1.5 per cent then to 20.8 in 2018. The survey estimates 4.9 per cent of college students vape. The US categorizes e-cigarettes as tobacco products, a definition not shared by all countries.—AFP ■



Some 3.6 million middle and high school students were current users of vaping products, up from 2.1 million the year before, while the number of cigarette smokers and consumption of other tobacco products remained stable. PHOTO: AFP

## AI system spots childhood disease like a doctor

PARIS (France) — An artificial intelligence (AI) programme developed in China that combs through test results, health records and even handwritten notes diagnosed childhood diseases as accurately as doctors, researchers said on Monday.

From the flu and asthma to life-threatening pneumonia and meningitis, the system consistently matched or out-performed primary care paediatricians, they reported in *Nature Medicine*.

Dozens of studies in recent months have detailed how AI is revolutionizing the detection of diseases including cancers, genetic disorders and Alzheimer's.

AI-based technology learns and improves in a way similar to humans, but has virtually unlimited capacity for data processing and storage.

"I believe that it will be able to perform most of the jobs a doctor does," senior author Kang Zhang, a researcher at the University of California, San Diego, told AFP.

"But AI will never replace a doctor," he added, comparing the relationship to an autonomous car that remains under the supervision of a human driver.

"It will simply allow doctors to do a better job in less time and at lower costs."

The new technology, said Zhang, is the first in which AI absorbs unstructured data and "natural language" to imitate the process by which a physician figures out what's wrong with a patient.

"It can mimic a human paediatrician to interpret and integrate all types of medical data — patient complaints, medical history, blood and imaging tests — to make a diagnosis," he said.

The system can be easily transferred to other languages and settings, he added.

By comparing hundreds of bits of information about a single patient with a vast store of acquired knowledge, the technology unearths links that previous statistical methods — and sometimes flesh-and-blood doctors — overlook.

### In the nick of time

To train the proof-of-concept system, Zhang and a team of 70

scientists injected more than 100 million data points from 1.3 million pediatrics patient visits at a major referral centre in Guangzhou, China.

The AI programme diagnosed respiratory infections and sinusitis — a common sinus infection — with 95 per cent accuracy.

More surprising, Kang said, it did as well with less common diseases: acute asthma (97 per cent), bacterial meningitis and varicella (93 per cent), and mononucleosis (90 per cent).

Such technologies may be coming in just the nick of time.

"The range of diseases, diagnostic testing and options for treatment has increased exponentially in recent years, rendering the decision-making process for physicians more complicated," Nature noted in a press release.

Experts not involved in the research said the study is further proof of AI's expanding role in medicine. "The work has the potential to improve healthcare by assisting the clinician in making rapid and accurate diagnoses," said Duc Pham, a professor of engineering at the University of Birmingham.

"The results show that, on average, the system performed better than junior doctors."

"But it will not replace clinicians," he added.

Machine learning — which forms general rules from specific training examples — "cannot guarantee 100 per cent correct results, no matter how many training examples they use."

AI-based tools for diagnosis abound, especially for interpreting machine-generated images such as MRI and CAT scans.

A method unveiled last month in the United States to detect lesions that can lead to cervical cancer found pre-cancerous cells with 91 per cent accuracy, compared to 69 per cent for physical exams performed by doctors and 71 per cent for conventional lab tests.

Likewise, a cellphone app based on AI technology out-performed experienced dermatologists in distinguishing potentially cancerous skin lesions from benign ones, according to a study in the *Annals of Oncology*.—AFP ■

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## Myanmar, Japan to jointly conduct Judo training



A Japanese delegation from Hoku'estu University Judo Federation arrived Yangon on 11 February night to carry out joint training with Myanmar judo athletes, according to Myanmar Judo Federation.

The 14-member delegation led by Hoku'estu University Judo Federation President Yasuji

Maki was welcomed by President of Myanmar Judo Federation U Tun Tun and members and Myanmar judo athletes.

Under the program jointly conducted by the MJF under the Ministry of Health and Sports and the Hoku'estu University Judo Federation, the judo athletes of Myanmar and Japan will

conduct joint training at the Kyekkan Sports Science School in Yangon from 11 to 21 February.

The delegation will also meet with the officials of the Ministry of Sports and Health and discuss the rejuvenation of judo in universities in Myanmar.—GNLM

(Translated by XXX)

## Martial can reach Ronaldo's level, says Man Utd boss Solskjaer



Manchester United's French striker Anthony Martial shoots to score their second goal during the English Premier League football match between Fulham and Manchester United at Craven Cottage in London on 9 February, 2019. PHOTO: AFP

LONDON (United Kingdom) — Anthony Martial has the talent to reach Cristiano Ronaldo's level if he puts his mind to it, according to Manchester United caretaker boss Ole Gunnar Solskjaer.

Martial had looked set to leave the club in the summer after falling out with Jose Mourinho but battled his way back into the Portuguese manager's plans. Last month, with Solskjaer now at the helm at Old Trafford, he signed a deal keeping him at the club until at least 2024.

The France international marked his first start since that contract with an assist and a superb second in the 3-0 win against Fulham, where his fine solo goal led ex-United captain Gary Neville to compare

it to a Ronaldo effort at Craven Cottage in 2007.

"He does have similarities, of course," said Solskjaer, who replaced the sacked Mourinho in December. "If he wants to be at Cristiano's level, Anthony knows what he has to do. It's up to him. He has the talent."

"I am glad he is in my team," the Norwegian added. "He has contributed to so many chances, so many goals. He is a Manchester United player. He excites the crowd. He excites the manager. He excites his teammates. And he is a great character around the place." Martial, 23, who became the most expensive teenager in history when he moved to United from Monaco in 2015 for an initial £36 million (\$46 million), has scored 47 goals for the club. Ronaldo scored 118 goals in 292 appearances for United, winning the Premier League three times and the Champions League. United play Paris Saint-Germain in the first leg of their Champions League quarter-final on Tuesday, bolstered by Neymar's injury, but Solskjaer said the absence of the Brazilian would be a loss.

"When you play against the best teams, you want to play against the players," he said. "The crowd want to see the best players. Too bad for Old Trafford."

"I have played a couple of games when we played Real Madrid and (Brazil's) Ronaldo and (Luis) Figo and all those were coming to Old Trafford. That gives it an extra edge. "Unfortunately for Neymar he is injured but of course he is a quality player. I think our right-back thinks it is not too bad he will not be here."—AFP ■

## Lampard refuses to consider Chelsea talk

LONDON (United Kingdom) — Derby coach Frank Lampard insists he isn't dreaming of a potential return to Chelsea amid talk that Blues boss Maurizio Sarri could be sacked.

Sarri is under fire following a troubled first season at Stamford Bridge.

The Italian's problems peaked on Sunday when Chelsea suffered their heaviest defeat for 28 years in a 6-0 thrashing at Manchester City.

That led to Lampard, who is Chelsea's record goal-scorer after a glittering 13-year spell at Stamford Bridge, to find his name mentioned as a candidate to replace Sarri if he is axed by Roman Abramovich.

The former England midfielder helped Chelsea win the Premier League and Champions League among other prizes and is regarded as one of the club's all-time greats.

In his first stint as a manager, Lampard has earned plaudits for his work at second tier Derby, who are in contention for promotion from the Championship.

But, speaking at a press conference on Monday, Lampard showed respect for Sarri's perilous position as he made it clear he wasn't ready to declare his interest in the Chelsea job.

"My job is here. We're working very hard and my thoughts are on Ipswich Town on Wednes-

day, and Brighton on Saturday," he said.

Lampard backed Chelsea to show resilience and respond to the humiliating defeat at the Etihad Stadium, a setback which leaves their top four hopes in turmoil.

Lampard, who had a brief spell at City at the end of his career, admitted he was stunned to see Chelsea out-classed.

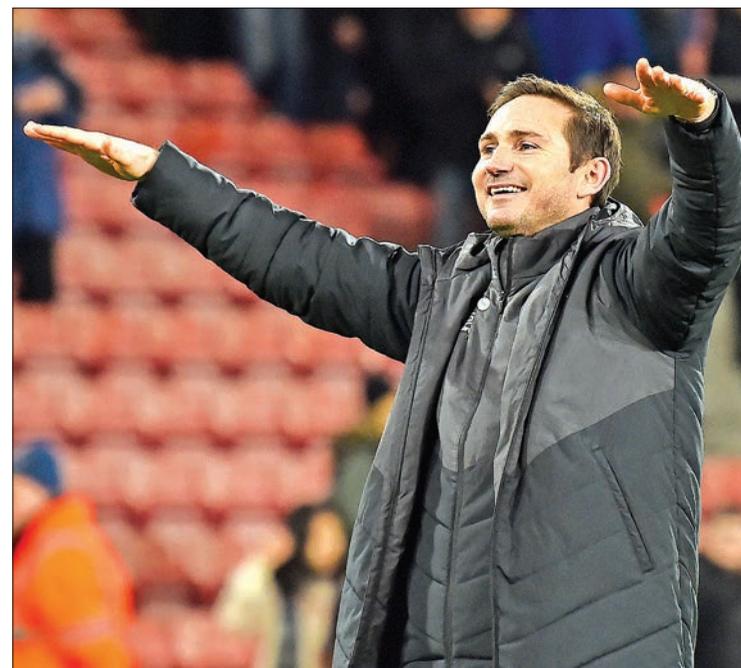
"With my Chelsea hat on, 13 years as a player there, you have a feeling for it and it's not nice, it's not easy. It doesn't happen to Chelsea much so when it does it's a shock," Lampard said.

"But they're going up against an incredible team and I had some time at Manchester City as well. I have some feelings for them. The work Pep Guardiola and their incredible squad have done is something special.

"For Chelsea it was a tough day. With all top teams the important thing is you come back strong, no matter what type of defeat. What makes top teams is resilience and Chelsea as a club will have it."

Chelsea now sit sixth in the Premier League, below Arsenal on goals scored, ahead of what could be a decisive period for Sarri before the end of February.

The Blues' next game is a trip to Malmo in the first leg of their Europa League last-32 tie on Thursday.—AFP ■



Derby County's English manager Frank Lampard celebrates on the pitch after his team win the penalty shoot-out during the English FA Cup third round replay football match between Southampton and Derby County at St Mary's Stadium in Southampton, southern England on 16 January, 2019. PHOTO: AFP